

## Sunday, Jan 19, 2020

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### Come together

Relationships go awry when people stop talking. That's as true in marriage as it is among Christians in general. Lutheran theologian George Lindbeck was a delegate observer at the Second Vatican Council. It prompted him to make a life's work of the Lutheran-Catholic conversation. He viewed doctrines as "rules of grammar" rather than unscalable walls. He saw justice, peace, and the environment best served when Christians work together. The fundamental disease of our times, Lindbeck advised, is the weakening of natural allies. As Saint Paul might say: Let's not be partisans, let's be church!

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 49:3, 5-6; 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; John 1:29-34 (64). *"To you . . . with all those everywhere who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

## Monday, Jan 20, 2020

MEMORIAL OF FABIAN, POPE, MARTYR; SEBASTIAN, MARTYR

### Ultimate discipleship

This day is filled with martyrs. Fabian (c. 200-250) was elected pope when a white dove landed on his head during the voting, a clear sign to the electors. Christianity was still illegal, so he died in prison 14 years later. Sebastian (c. 256-288) died in Rome sometime after he was shot full of arrows. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-68), commemorated today, was gunned down by an assassin in Memphis, Tennessee. Despite being harassed by the government, Dr. King won the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize and was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Three men who shed their blood for what they believed inspire us to be activists for what we believe.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 15:16-23; Mark 2:18-22 (311). *"To the upright I will show the saving power of God."*

## Tuesday, Jan 21, 2020

MEMORIAL OF AGNES, VIRGIN, MARTYR

### Take a stand

Often throughout the church year we remember our martyrs, those women and men who were killed because of their faith in Jesus the Christ. These are sometimes difficult days to "celebrate" because on the one hand, we are grateful for and inspired by their faith. But on the other hand, the suffering they endured is horrific—torture, rape, mutilation, burning, and ultimately death. The martyrdom of Saint Agnes, for example, came because of her faith in Christ but was expressed by sexualizing and abusing her. When we celebrate our martyrs, we might also take a stand against torture and murder today. This indeed is a worthy form of reverence for the brave women and men, our martyrs and saints. What saint compels you to action on behalf of justice?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Mark 2:23-28 (312). *"The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath."*

## Wednesday, Jan 22, 2020

DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF UNBORN CHILDREN

### Lend a lifesaving hand

The Sisters of Life are a women's religious order founded in 2004 in New York. More than 70 sisters each year provide aid and support to more than 1,000 pregnant women at their convents in Toronto and New York City. At one of their convents, women

can stay as long as six months prior to giving birth and up to a year afterward. What are you and your parish doing to support pregnant women and mothers who need help establishing their families and creating a secure future for their children?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51; Mark 3:1-6 (313). *"Looking around at them with anger and grieved at their hardness of heart . . ."*

## Thursday, Jan 23, 2020

MEMORIAL OF MARIANNE COPE, VIRGIN

### God's aloha at work

Rarely is a saint's last name so apt. When more than 50 religious communities in Canada and the United States refused a request to work with lepers, Sister Marianne Cope, a Sister of St. Francis of Syracuse, responded, "I am hungry for the work." She and her sisters who served on Molokai, Hawaii were called "God's aloha," or God's love. She assured a dying Saint Damien that his work would continue, then brought beauty and artistry to challenging conditions. Encouraging laughter and gardens, she said, "We must make best use of the fleeting moments. They will not return." Do one thing to bring God's love and beauty to your living space, or someone else's, today.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7; Mark 3:7-12 (314). *"Hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers."*

## Friday, Jan 24, 2020

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Include God in the conversation

Francis de Sales (1567-1622) was a bishop and doctor of the church who encouraged the importance of lay spirituality. At the time, people thought that only priests and sisters were called to holiness. But Francis took the church back to its roots, encouraging laypeople to pray and find God in their daily lives. As a noted spiritual director he suggested: "Retire at various times into the solitude of your own heart, even while outwardly engaged in discussion or transactions with others, and talk to God."

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 Samuel 24:3-21; Mark 3:13-19 (315). *"He named twelve as his companions whom he would send to preach the Good News."*

## Saturday, Jan 25, 2020

FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE

### Be a force for unity

Once he was blinded by light on the road to Damascus, Paul began to see with a clarity that amazed everyone who knew of him. As he preached the Good News, Paul began to speak persuasively against requiring Gentiles to follow Jewish law, while at the same time allowing Jewish Christians to keep their lifelong ritual practices. In the midst of diversity, Paul worked to unite the followers of Jesus. It is fitting that the feast of his conversion has been chosen as the final day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Today your work is to do something to bring unity in the midst of diversity.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22; Mark 16:15-18 (519). *"This man is the instrument I have chosen to bring my name to the Gentiles."*

*Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time*



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